

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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S E C R E T STATE 222154

EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR , MILITARY ADDRESSEES TREAT AS SPECAT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, RP

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MARCOS; MBA TALKS

REFS: (A) MANILA 15135, (B) MANILA 15137, (C) MANILA 15221
(NOTAL), (D) STATE 216153 (NOTAL)

1. AGREE IT ADVISABLE THAT YOU SEE MARCOS PRIOR TO DEPAR-
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TURE, AND THAT YOU RAISE VARIETY OF ISSUES SO AS TO AVOID
IMPRESSION YOUR CONSULTATIONS LINKED TO BASE TALKS. SHARE
YOUR OPINION THAT ONLY MARCOS CAN CLARIFY LATEST DEVELOP-
MENTS; HOWEVER SUGGEST GEN. MANOR INFORM ESPINO THAT, IN
COURSE OF PREDEPARTURE CALL, YOU WILL DEAL WITH QUESTIONS
ESPINO RAISED. MANOR CAN ALSO DRAW UPON THIS TEL FOR HIS
TALK WITH ESPINO.

2. FYI: WE SEE ESPINO'S RAISING QUESTION RE INTERPRETATION MDT, LENGTHENING RECESS OF MILITARY-TO-MILITARY TALKS, CONTINUED GOP-INSPIRED ANTI-BASE ACTIVITIES (E.G., IMEE MARCOS' YOUTH GROUP) AND INJECTION OF USSR AS AN ISSUE AS POSSIBLE INDICATIONS MARCOS DOES NOT WANT TO MOVE FORWARD ON BASE TALKS AT THIS TIME AND/OR WISHES TO INCREASE HIS LEVERAGE WITH US BEFORE DOING SO. THIS WOULD NOT BE UNUSUAL, GIVEN PAST HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS AND THERE ARE NUMBER OF REASONS WHY, DOMESTIC, BILATERAL, ETC. WHATEVER THE CASE,

MARCOS, BY INDULGING IN THIS TRADITIONAL GAME, IS PLAYING WITH FIRE, GIVEN CURRENT VIEW OF PHILIPPINES IN US-- ESPECIALLY CONGRESS. AS YOU KNOW, ASSISTANCE TO PHILIPPINES--MILITARY AND ECONOMIC--HAS BEEN APPROVED LARGELY DUE TO IMPORTANCE OF BASES AND REASONABLE STANCE GOP TAKING IN TALKS. END FYI.

(A) GENERAL ESPINO ASKED FOR OUR EVALUATION OF SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY IN THE PACIFIC AND REPORTS OF SOVIET MISSILES OR BASES IN SRV. THE GRADUAL EXPANSION OF THE SOVIET NAVY IN THE PACIFIC OVER RECENT YEARS WAS OUTLINED IN THE BRIEFING GIVEN TO PRESIDENT MARCOS BY FORMER DOD DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ABRAMOWITZ AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE LAST JANUARY. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF NEW SOVIET PACIFIC FLEET DEVELOPMENTS THAT WOULD SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGE THAT PICTURE.

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YOU MAY ALSO ASSURE MARCOS THAT ALTHOUGH THE USSR USES VIETNAM AS A MEANS OF EXTENDING ITS POWER INTO SE ASIA, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED OR ARE ESTABLISHING ICBM FACILITIES IN VIETNAM OR A NAVLA BASE AT CAM RAHN BAY OR OTHER FIXED INSTALLATIONS. WE HAVE HAD RECENT INDICATION OF SOME INCREASE OF SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND ADVISORS IN THE SRV, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW THE SCALE OF SUCH INCREASED AID TO THE VIETNAMESE. WE ARE WATCHING THE SITUATION CLOSELY, AND WOULD ADVISE THE GOP SHOULD WE AT ANY TIME ASCERTAIN THAT THE SOVIETS ARE INCREASING THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE. HOWEVER, THERE MAY BE GAPS ON OUR INFORMATION AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF THE GOP WOULD PASS ON TO US ANY RELIABLE REPORTS IT MAY RECEIVE ON THESE OR OTHER SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN VIETNAM. (WE HAVE AGREED THAT CINCPAC AS REQUESTED REF A, WILL BE SENDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IN RESPONSE TO ESPINO'S REQUEST THAT CAN BE PROVIDED TO THE GOP SUBJECT TO YOUR APPROVAL.)

(B) IN REGARDS MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY, WHICH ESPINO ALSO RAISED, WE FEEL IT HAD BEEN RESOLVED WHEN PRESIDENT CARTER, IN HIS LETTER (TO MARCOS) DATED OCTOBER 27, 1977 STATED, "LET ME ASSURE YOU AGAIN THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

CONSIDERS THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY TO BE BINDING UPON US, AND THAT WE WILL FULFILL OUR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE TREATY."

THIS MATTER WAS ALSO DISCUSSED BETWEEN MARCOS AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE IN SEPTEMBER 1977. AT THAT TIME WE REAFFIRMED OUR INTENTION TO FULFILL OUR COMMITMENT UNDER THE TREATY. WE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE NOT TO INVOLVE OURSELVES IN QUESTIONS REGARDING HYPOTHETICAL CASES. WERE WE TO REPLY TO SUCH QUESTIONS, OUR FORMAL RESPONSE MUST NECESSARILY PLACE MORE EMPHASIS

ON THE LIMITS OF OUR COMMITMENT THAN ON THE BROADER RELATIONSHIP AND SHARED INTERESTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES.

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(C) IF IT APPEARS POSSIBLE TO MAKE POINT WITHOUT GIVING IMPRESSION YOUR CONSULTATIONS ARE OCCASIONED BY CONCERN OVER BASE TALKS, IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE TO REMIND MARCOS THAT ASEAN, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, JAPAN, TAIWAN AND NOW PRC HAVE EXPRESSED VIEWS THAT U.S. BASES IN PHILIPPINES CONTRIBUTE TO REGIONAL STABILITY WHICH IS AS MUCH IN INTERESTS OF GOP AS U.S. THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL REASON WHY BASES ARE CLEARLY OF MUTUAL BENEFIT.

(D) WHEN IN WASHINGTON YOU WILL BE MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, WHO HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING BASE TALKS WITH GREAT INTEREST. INDEED IT HAS BEEN AN APPRECIATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TALKS AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THE GOP HAS APPROACHED THE QUESTION WHICH HAS ASSISTED THE ADMINISTRATION IN OBTAINING CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT IN MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE PHILIPPINES. ON THE HILL THE QUESTION WILL ARISE AS TO HOW THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE PROCEEDING, AND THE LIKELY TIME FRAME IN WHICH THE MILITARY-TO-MILITARY TALKS MAY BE CONCLUDED. CAN MARCOS OFFER SOME COMMENTS FROM GOP POINT OF VIEW, WHICH WILL BE USEFUL IN REPLYING TO THESE QUESTIONS?
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